

DRAFT

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**CALFED AGENCIES CONCLUDE PHASE I:
IDENTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE RANGE OF SOLUTION ALTERNATIVES**

Two years ago representatives of the undersigned Federal and State agencies committed to work cooperatively to develop a long-term solution to the problems affecting the San Francisco Bay-Sacramento/San Joaquin River Bay-Delta system. In the spring of 1995, the agencies established the CALFED Bay-Delta Program as the comprehensive, long-term planning effort to address the resource problems of the Delta. This cooperative effort sought to identify and evaluate solutions to problems of ecosystem quality, water supply reliability, water quality, and vulnerability of Delta levees and channels to natural disasters. Through the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, the State and Federal agencies have now completed the first of a three-phase process by identifying a reasonable range of solution alternatives to undergo detailed analysis in the environmental review processes of Phases II and III.

In crafting the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, the Federal and State agencies understood that the eventual success of the effort to develop a lasting solution for the Bay-Delta system depended upon the full and equal involvement of all interested parties in a collaborative process. The agencies believed the process must make use of existing information and documents that were the products of previous state and Federal efforts. In addition, the agencies designed the process to develop a Bay-Delta solution that addressed fundamental problems of the system in an equitable, comprehensive, and linked manner, and to measure the performance of alternatives against the problems and objectives that were most important to the vitality of the Bay-Delta. Finally, the agencies intended the process to produce solutions of manageable scope; a landmark cooperative solution that could not be implemented was not a solution.

The agencies designed the Phase I process to identify a suite of alternative sets of actions which would improve the Bay-Delta system. The process allowed for equal involvement among all interest groups, supported open communications and innovative thinking, and fostered consensus and cooperation. Finally, the process incorporated much of the existing information already available and combined different actions to provide integrated solutions reflecting a variety of concerns and ideas which ultimately will ensure the health and productivity of the Bay-Delta system.

Phase I consisted of a step-by-step development program. Each step of Phase I was based upon the work of the staff and management of the CALFED agencies, input from the public workshops and meetings, involvement of the Bay-Delta Advisory Council, suggestions from many interests groups, and a variety of other public outreach efforts. The Phase I steps were as follows:

Step 1. Defining the problem for the four resource areas - ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply and system vulnerability;

Step 2. Developing preliminary objectives, mission and scope;

Step 3. Identifying potential actions which could become part of the alternatives;

Step 4. Crafting solution strategies which ensure that problems are addressed in each of the four resource areas in an equitable, comprehensive and linked manner;

Step 5. Identifying preliminary alternatives; and

Step 6. Refining alternatives

This process resulted in a short list of three alternatives that along with a no-action alternative will be analyzed in a program-level environmental impact statement/report (EIS/EIR). As a result of the Phase I process, each alternative consists of variable components related to water storage and Delta conveyance. Each alternative also contains common programs related to water use efficiency, water quality, system vulnerability, and ecosystem quality. The alternatives are as follows:

Alternative 1. Existing System Conveyance where limited or no modifications are made to the flow capacity of the existing Delta Channels; Storage Variable including a range of no storage or a combination of North of Delta, South of Delta, and/or in-Delta surface storage, as well as Conjunctive Use/Groundwater Banking; Water Use Efficiency Measures; Water Quality Improvements; System Integrity; and Ecosystem Restoration.

Alternative 2. Through Delta Conveyance where a variety of modifications to Delta channels could be made to increase the conveyance efficiency; Storage Variable including a range of no storage or a combination of North of Delta, South of Delta, and/or in-Delta surface storage, as well as Conjunctive Use/Groundwater Banking; Water Use Efficiency Measures; Water Quality Improvements; System Integrity; and Ecosystem Restoration.

Alternative 3. Dual Delta Conveyance where a combination of improved through Delta conveyance and conveyance isolated from Delta channels is used; a fully isolated facility with no through Delta conveyance component will also be analyzed; Storage Variable including a range of no storage or a combination of North of Delta, South of Delta, and/or in-Delta surface storage, as well as Conjunctive Use/Groundwater Banking; Water Use Efficiency Measures; Water Quality Improvements; System Integrity Improvements; and Ecosystem Restoration.

The undersigned agencies believe that the Phase I process guided the identification of an appropriate range of solution alternatives which together with a no action/no project alternative will undergo subsequent detailed analysis and environmental review during the following Program phases. The Phase II process will include refinement of the alternative components, development of strategies for implementing the alternatives; and, preparation of a joint EIS/EIR to identify impacts associated with various alternatives. The primary purpose of the Program EIS/EIR is to inform decision-makers about the environmental benefits and detriments, particularly the interrelated and cumulative consequences of the alternatives.

The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. The undersigned agencies affirm their commitment to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, completing a programmatic EIS/EIR, and working cooperatively to solve the problems of the Bay-Delta system.

Signed:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

California Resources Agency

National Marine Fisheries Service

California Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

California Department of Fish and Game

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

California Department of Water Resources

State Water Resources Control Board